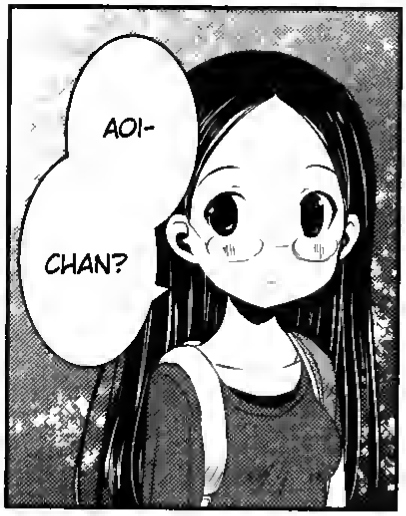
MY FIELD OF VIEW SUDDENLY OPENED UP
OH... RIGHT
I REMEMBER WHY I'VE WALKED ALL THIS WAY

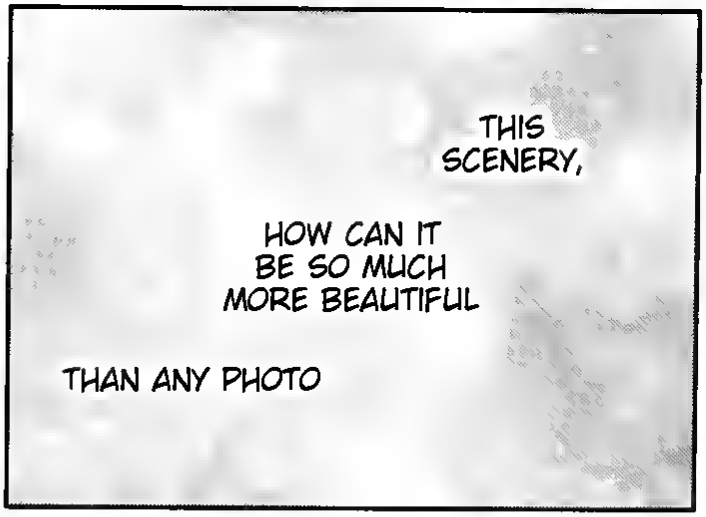
IT WAS ALL SO I COULD SEE THIS KIND OF SCENERY

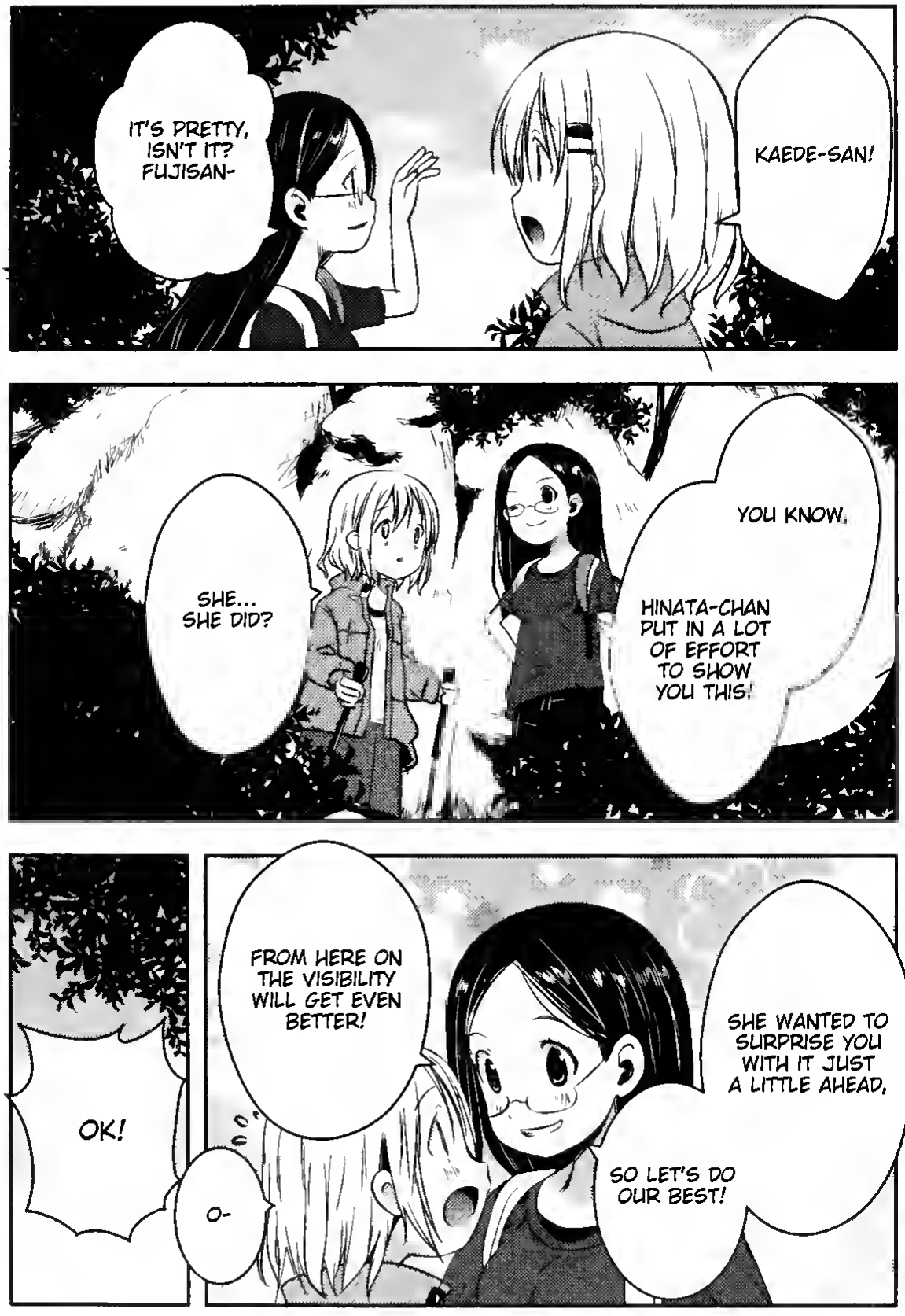
12TH CLIMB: ABOUT CLIMBING MOUNTAINS

IT REALLY IS PALE, LIKE A DRAWING
FUJISAN

EVEN THOUGH I'M SEEING IT MYSELF
OR RATHER,
IT'S LIKE A PHOTO POSTCARD...

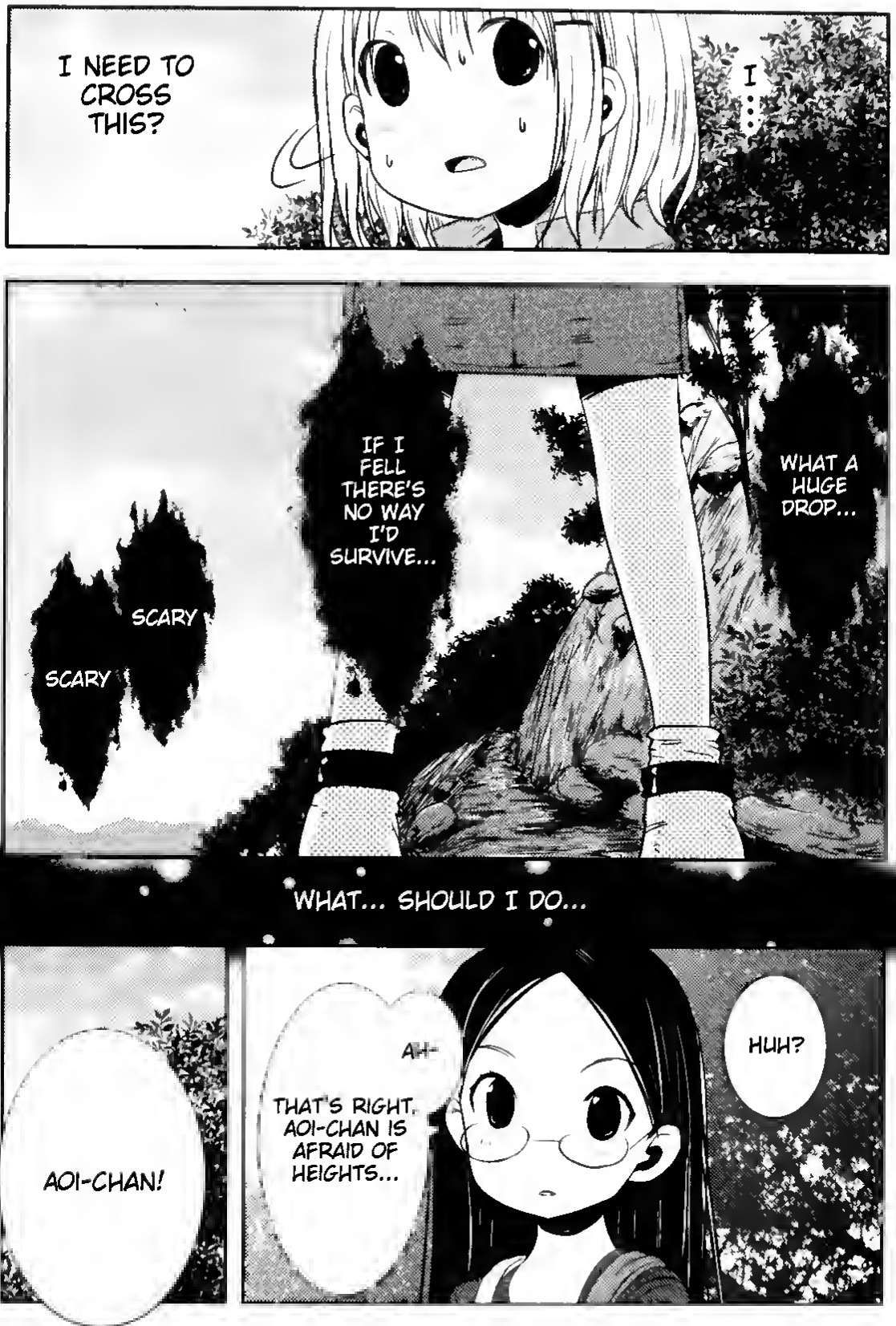

AOI-
CHAN?


THIS SCENERY,
HOW CAN IT BE SO MUCH MORE BEAUTIFUL
THAN ANY PHOTO


KAEDE-SAN!
IT'S PRETTY, ISN'T IT? FUJISAN-
YOU KNOW, HINATA-CHAN PUT IN A LOT OF EFFORT TO SHOW YOU THIS!
SHE... SHE DID?
SHE WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU WITH IT JUST A LITTLE AHEAD, SO LET'S DO OUR BEST!
FROM HERE ON THE VISIBILITY WILL GET EVEN BETTER!
O-
OK!

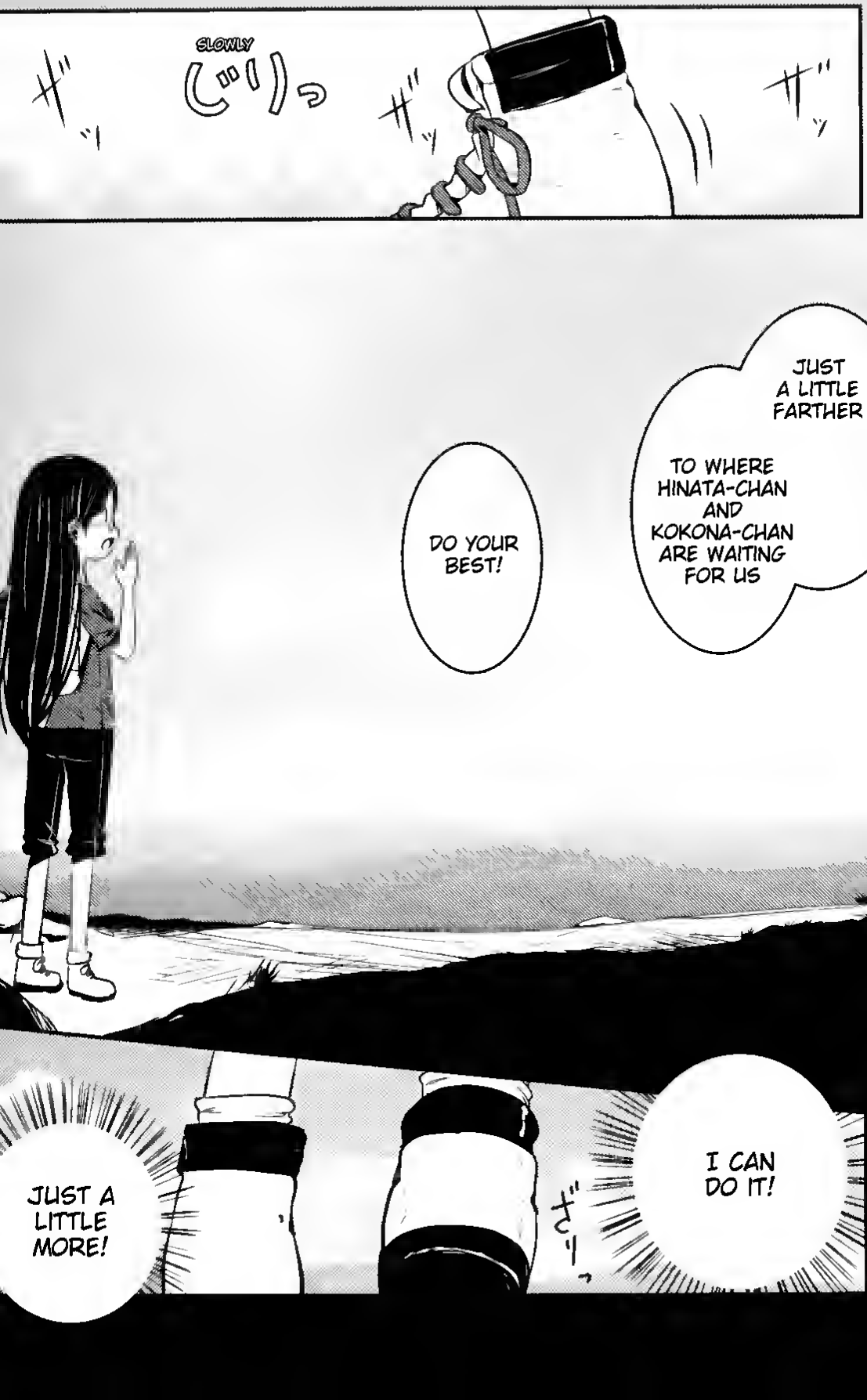
THE FILTERED SUNLIGHT FEELS NICE...
THE TREES HAVE BECOME MORE SPARSE
I WANT TO GET TO THE TOP SOON...
BUT THIS IS KINDA FUN
HUFF
IT'S STILL A TOUGH CLIMB
HUFF
AH- WE'RE OUT OF THE FOREST!
!!

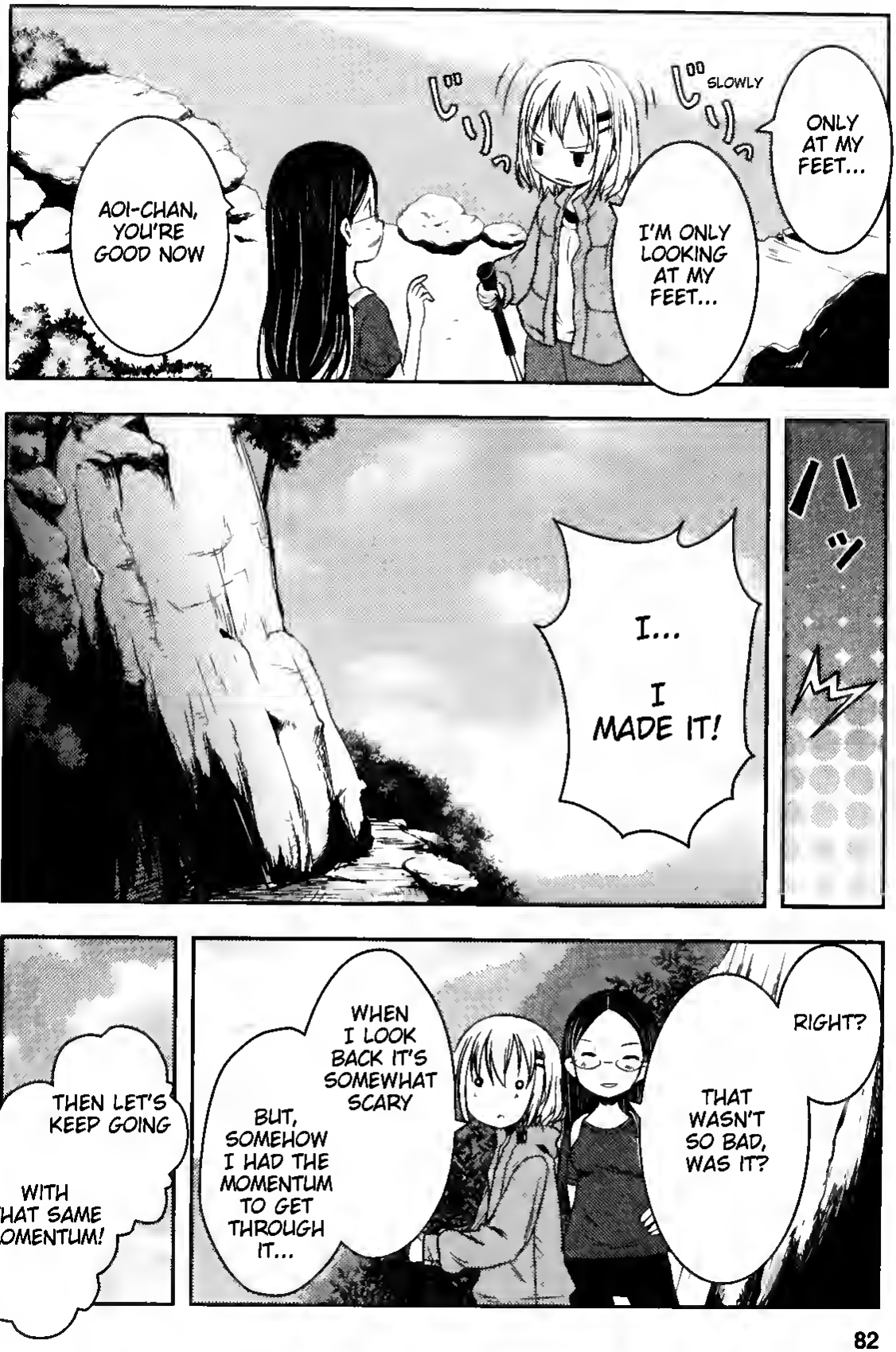
SHIVER
A CLIFF?
WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?
ABOUT 30 CM WIDE

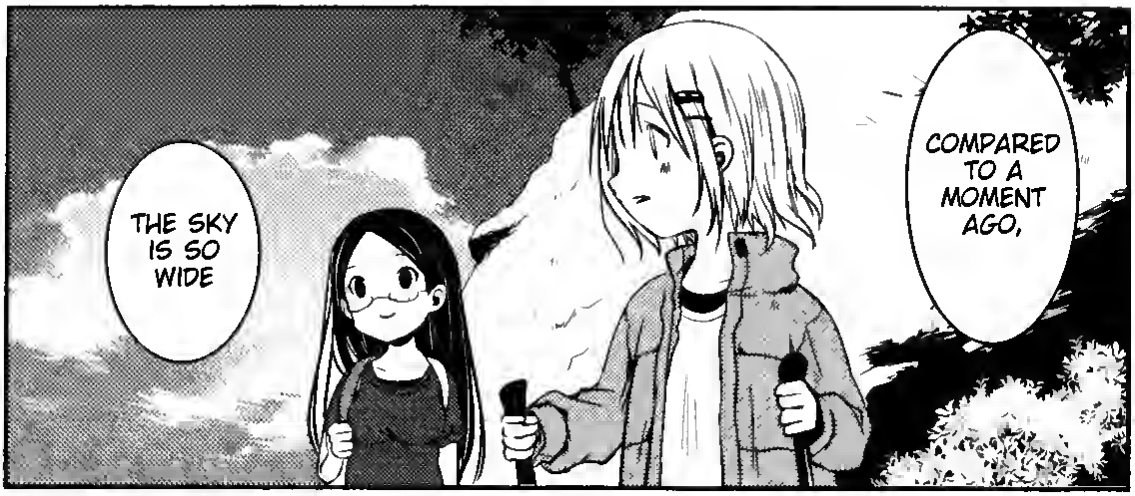

I NEED TO CROSS THIS?
I...
WHAT A HUGE DROP...
IF I FELL THERE'S NO WAY I'D SURVIVE...
SCARY
SCARY
WHAT... SHOULD I DO...
HUH?
AH-
THAT'S RIGHT, AOI-CHAN IS AFRAID OF HEIGHTS...
AOI-CHAN!

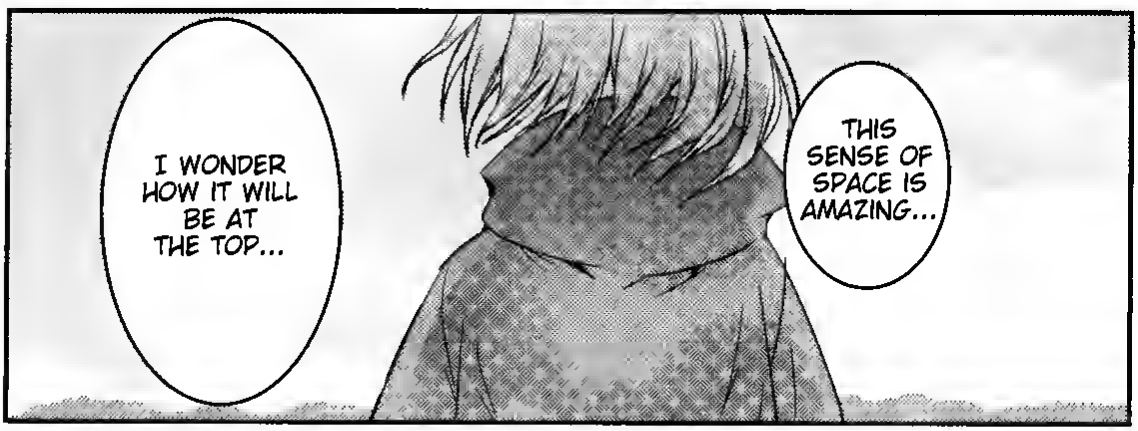
ARE YOU OK? SCARED?
Y-YES?
IT WOULD BE REALLY BAD IF I FELL HERE...
YOU'LL BE FINE! IF YOU FALL YOU'LL JUST BREAK A FEW BONES!
ALTHOUGH YOU'D DIE IF YOU FELL BADLY
UGH...
HMM
OH YEAH- AOI-CHAN
KEEP YOUR EYES ON YOUR FEET AS YOU WALK!
IT WON'T BE SCARY THAT WAY!
HUH?
IT... WORKS...
IF I LOOK AT MY FEET I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING ELSE, AND IT'S NOT SO SCARY...
I THINK I CAN MAKE IT LIKE THIS...

ぐっ
HERE I GO...
OK...
FORWARD, ONE STEP AT A TIME
SLOWLY,
SLOWLY,
ﾍﾞｷ
ﾍﾞｷ
ﾍﾞｷ
BA BUM
ﾍﾞｷ
BA BUM
SWEATING

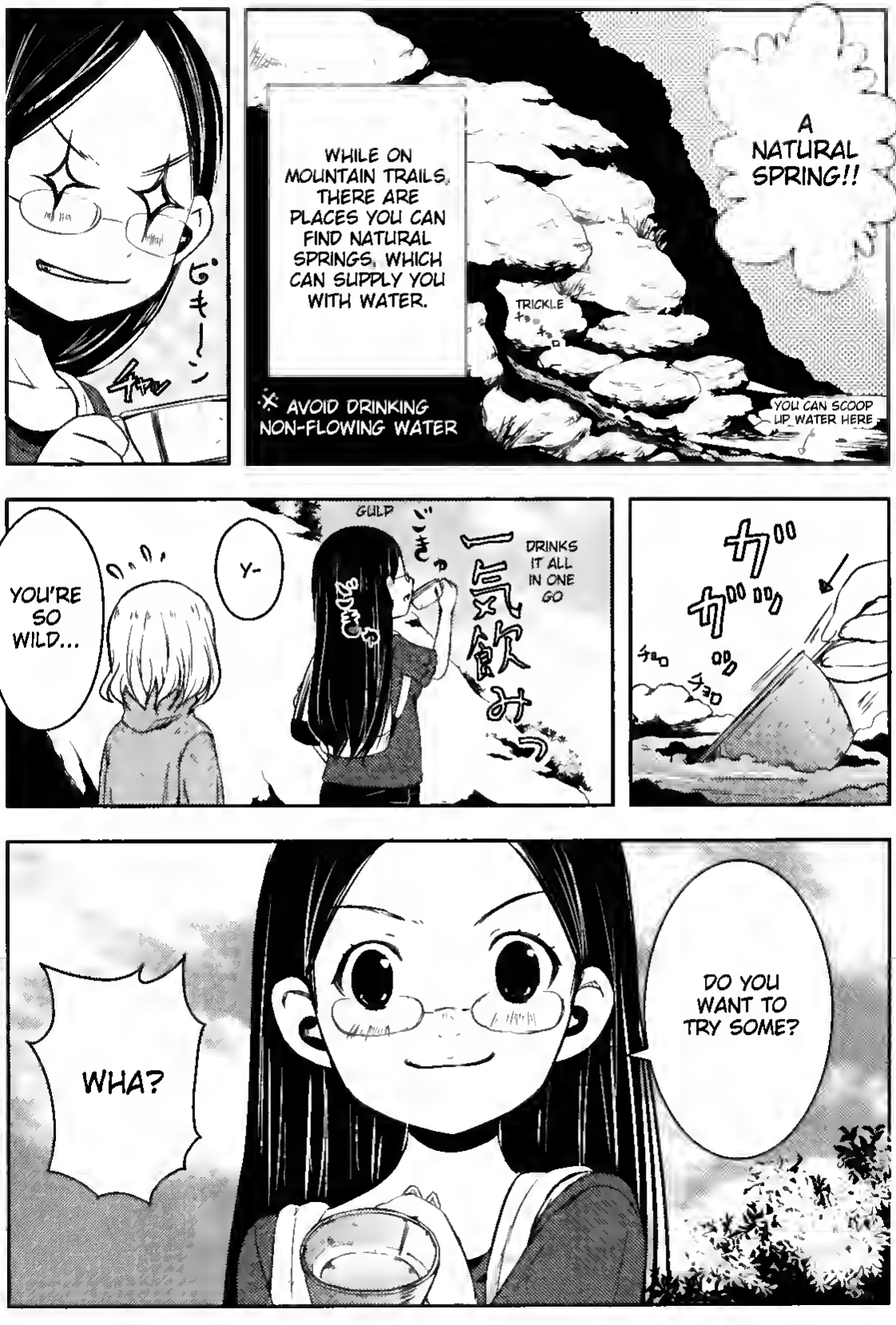

SLOWLY
じりっ
JUST A LITTLE FARTHER
TO WHERE HINATA-CHAN AND KOKONA-CHAN ARE WAITING FOR US
DO YOUR BEST!
JUST A LITTLE MORE!
I CAN DO IT!
ざりっ

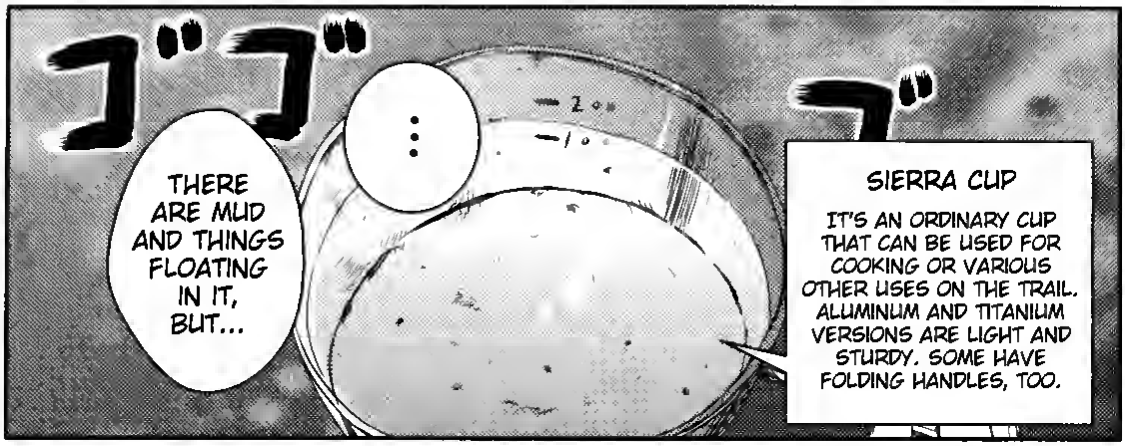

AOI-CHAN, YOU'RE GOOD NOW
じ〜
I'M ONLY LOOKING AT MY FEET...
じ〜 SLOWLY
ONLY AT MY FEET...
I... I MADE IT!
ハッ
THEN LET'S KEEP GOING
WITH THAT SAME MOMENTUM!
BUT, SOMEHOW I HAD THE MOMENTUM TO GET THROUGH IT...
WHEN I LOOK BACK IT'S SOMEWHAT SCARY
THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?
RIGHT?

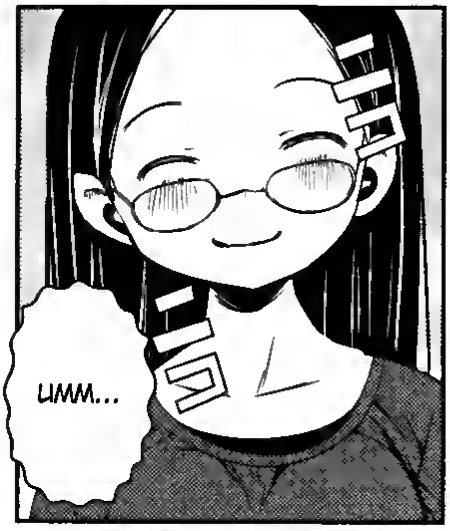

COMPARED TO A MOMENT AGO,
THE SKY IS SO WIDE


THIS SENSE OF SPACE IS AMAZING...
I WONDER HOW IT WILL BE AT THE TOP...

TRICKLE
?
THE SOUND OF WATER...?
OHH!

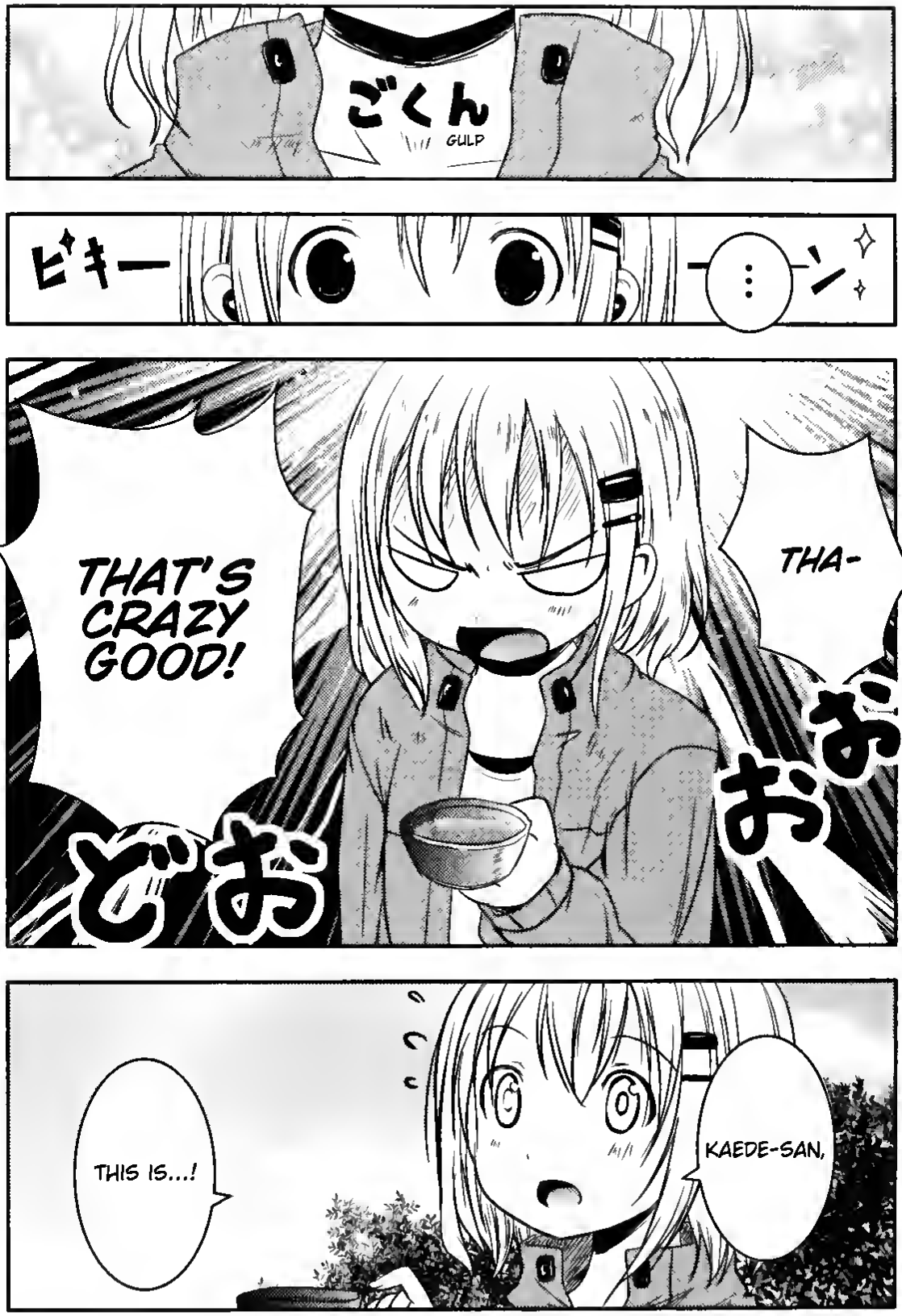

ピキーン
WHILE ON MOUNTAIN TRAILS, THERE ARE PLACES YOU CAN FIND NATURAL SPRINGS, WHICH CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH WATER.
A NATURAL SPRING!!
TRICKLE
AVOID DRINKING NON-FLOWING WATER
YOU CAN SCOOP UP WATER HERE
YOU'RE SO WILD...
Y-
GULP
DRINKS IT ALL IN ONE GO
一気飲み
カ
WHA?
DO YOU WANT TO TRY SOME?

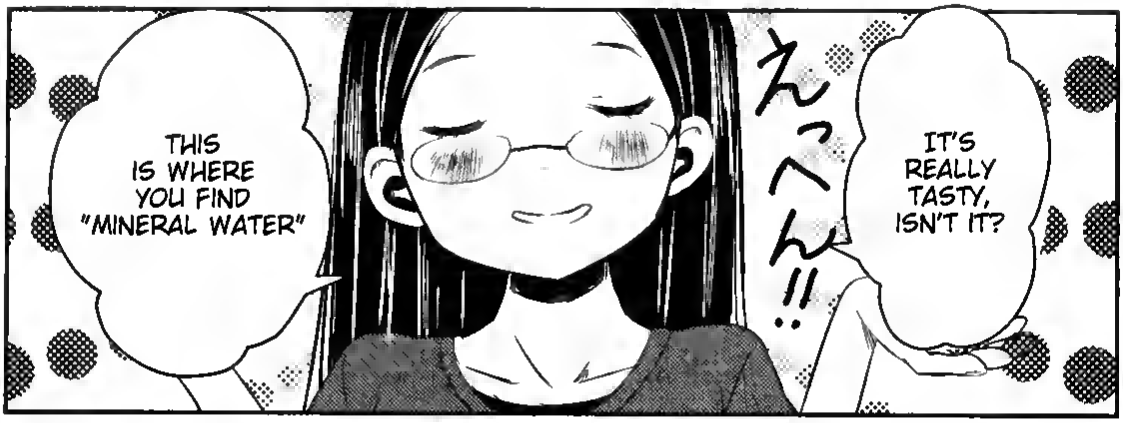

ゴゴゴ
…
THERE ARE MUD AND THINGS FLOATING IN IT, BUT...
SIERRA CUP
IT'S AN ORDINARY CUP THAT CAN BE USED FOR COOKING OR VARIOUS OTHER USES ON THE TRAIL. ALUMINUM AND TITANIUM VERSIONS ARE LIGHT AND STURDY. SOME HAVE FOLDING HANDLES, TOO.

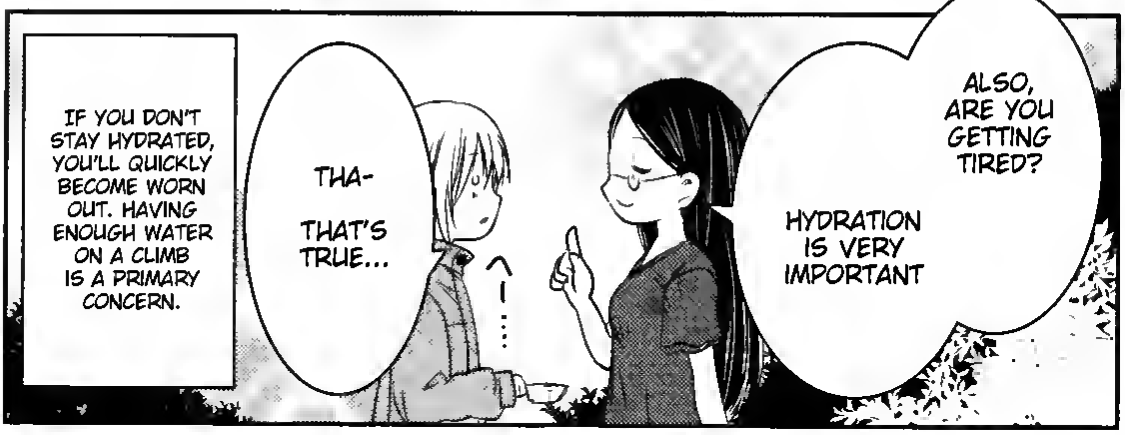

UMM...

I GUESS I HAVE TO DRIVE IT...
ﾄﾞｳﾞﾗ!

ゴクッ
GULP
…!!
HERE GOES!

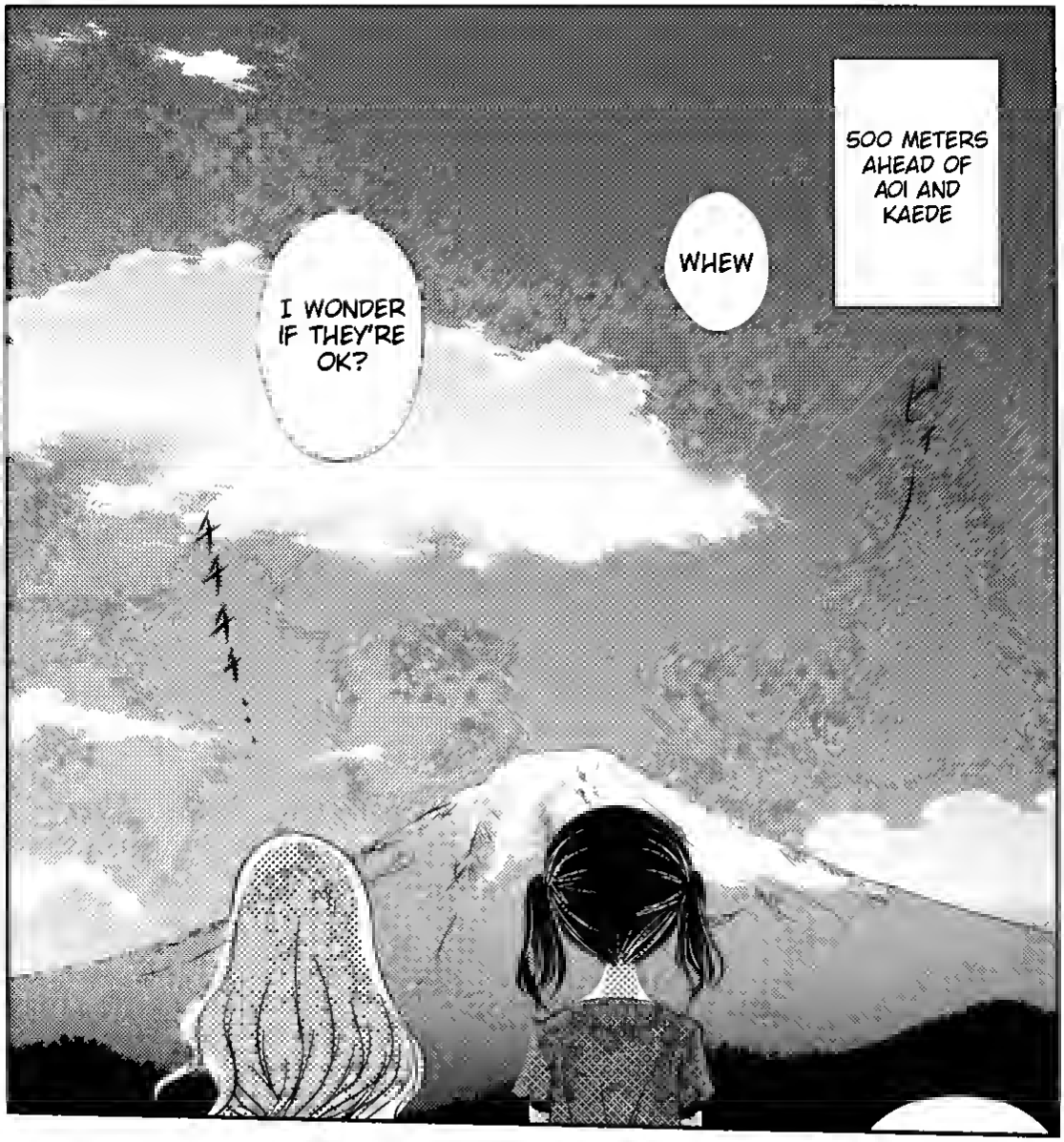

ごくん
GULP
ピキーン
THAT'S CRAZY GOOD!
どお
THA-
おおお
KAEDE-SAN,
THIS IS...!


THIS IS WHERE YOU FIND "MINERAL WATER"
えっへん!!
IT'S REALLY TASTY, ISN'T IT?

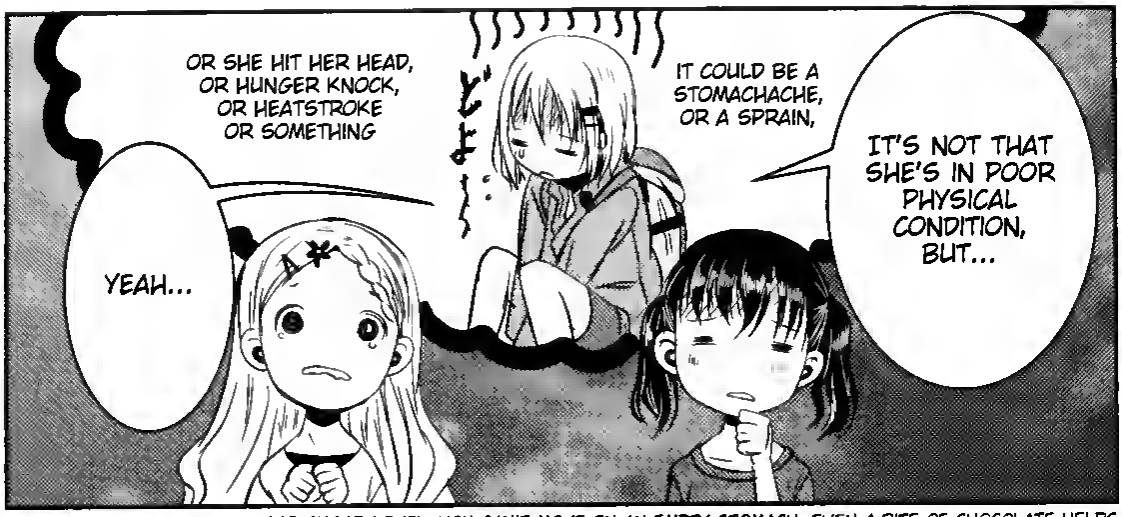

IF YOU DON'T STAY HYDRATED, YOU'LL QUICKLY BECOME WORN OUT. HAVING ENOUGH WATER ON A CLIMB IS A PRIMARY CONCERN.
THA- THAT'S TRUE...
HYDRATION IS VERY IMPORTANT
ALSO, ARE YOU GETTING TIRED?

OK!
AFTER A LITTLE BREAK, LET'S KEEP GOING-

SURE!
IS IT OK IF I DRINK A LITTLE MORE?


500 METERS AHEAD OF AOI AND KAEDE
WHEW
I WONDER IF THEY'RE OK?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE WENT AHEAD OF THEM...
THE CLIMB WAS A LITTLE TOUGH...
YEAH...

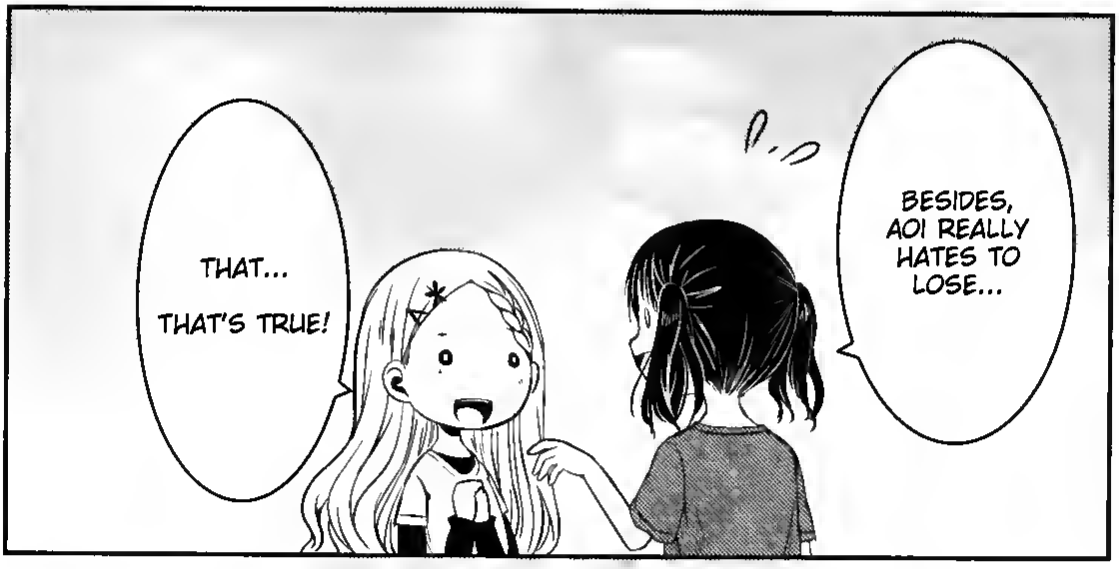

IT'S NOT THAT SHE'S IN POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION, BUT...
IT COULD BE A STOMACHACHE, OR A SPRAIN,
どよ～ん
OR SHE HIT HER HEAD, OR HUNGER KNOCK, OR HEATSTROKE OR SOMETHING
YEAH...

HUNGER KNOCK: DEPLETED BLOOD SUGAR LEVEL. YOU CAN'T MOVE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH. EVEN A BITE OF CHOCOLATE HELPS.

WHAT A WASTE

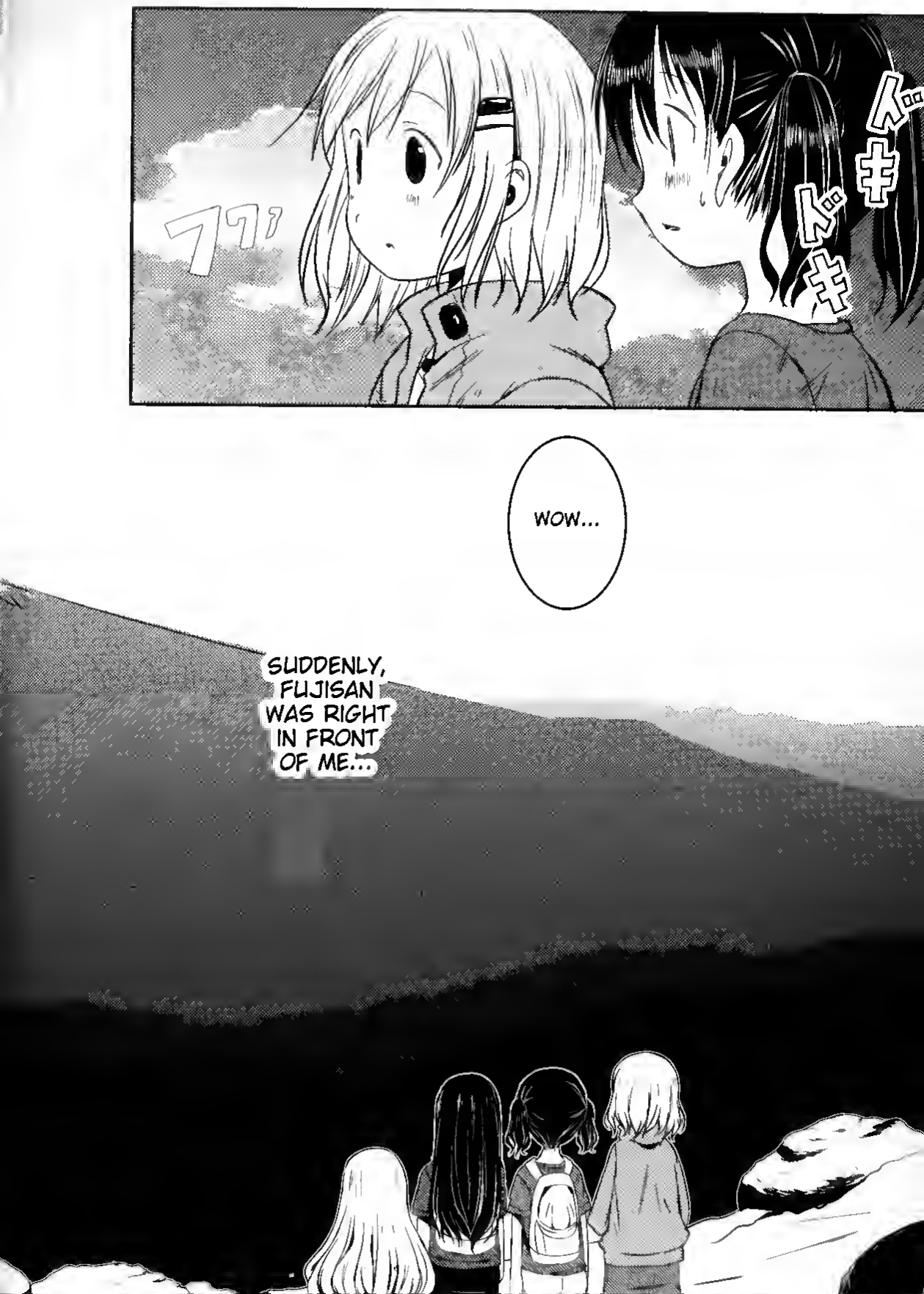
I'LL KEEP SMILING

EVEN WITHOUT ANY BASIS FOR IT



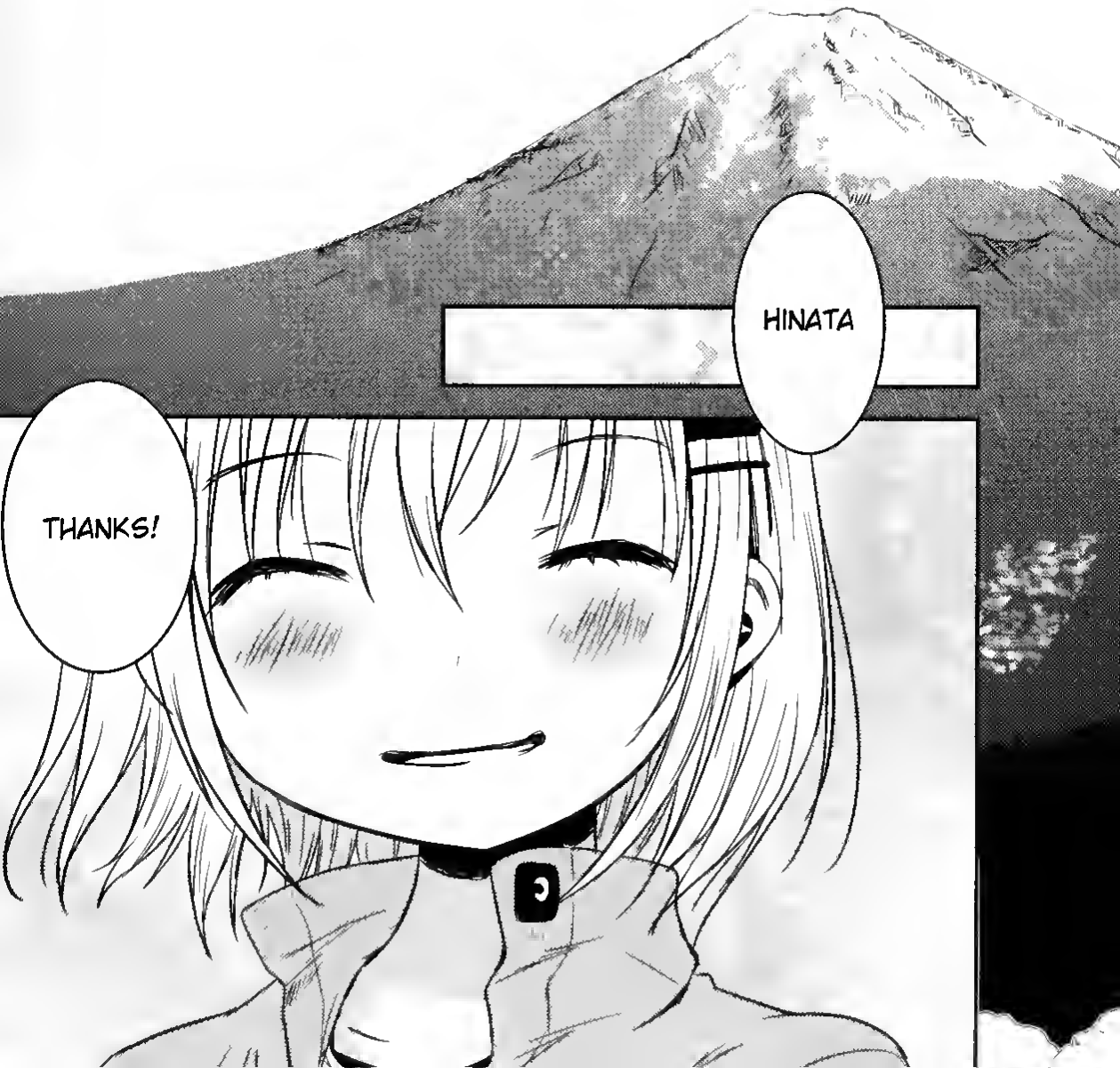
SO THAT THIS HAPPINESS DOESN'T ESCAPE

AH!
AOI-SAN! KAEDE-SAN!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT!
ARE YOU OK?
YEAH, I'M FINE NOW
SORRY ABOUT THAT
OH, GOOD!
THAT'S A RELIEF...
OH RIGHT,
AOI, LOOK OVER THERE!


ハッ…
ドキ
ドキ
WOW...
SUDDENLY, FUJISAN WAS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME...

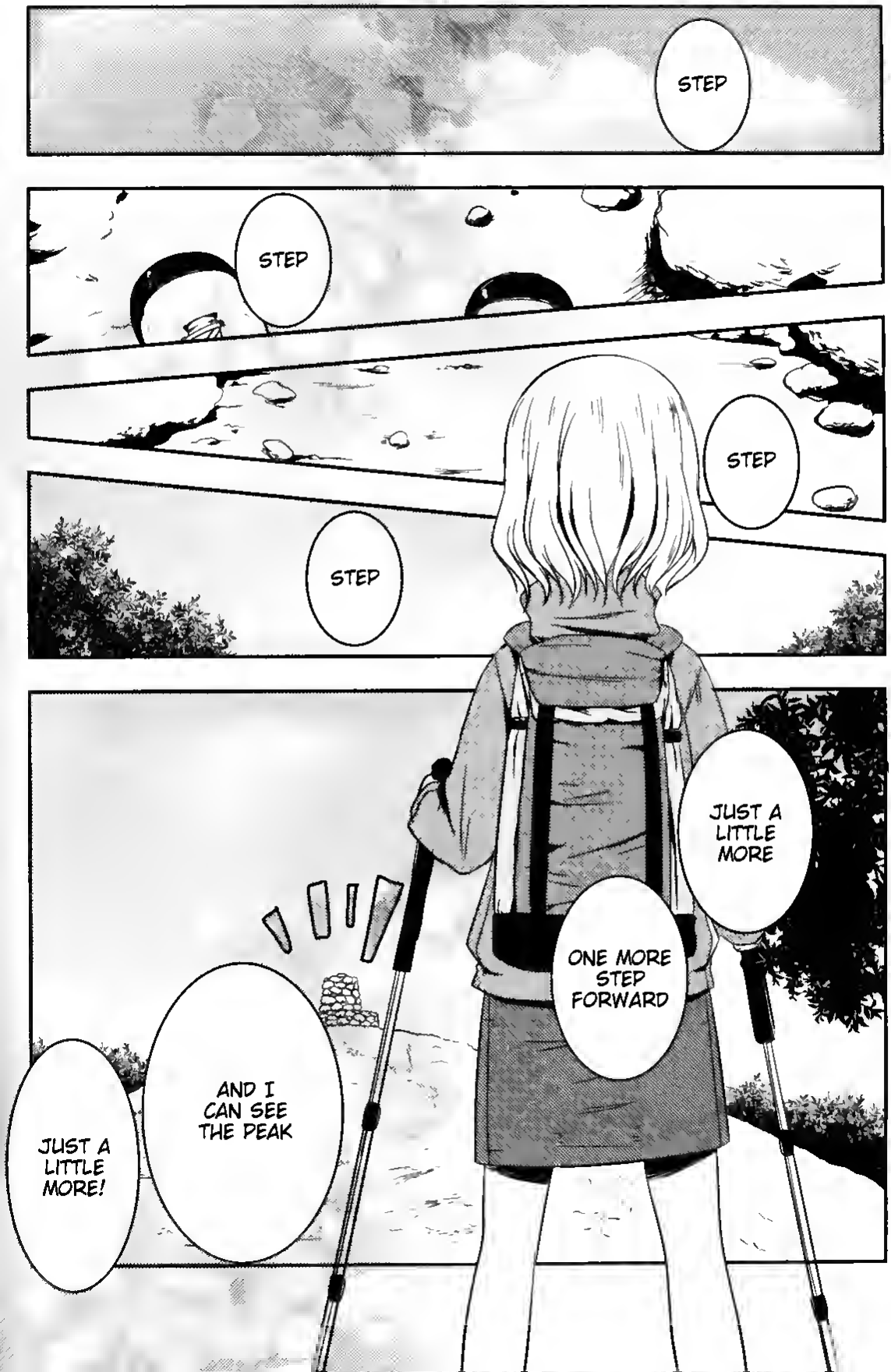
AND THOUGH I
HAD BEEN REALLY
WORRIED ABOUT
WHAT I SHOULD SAY

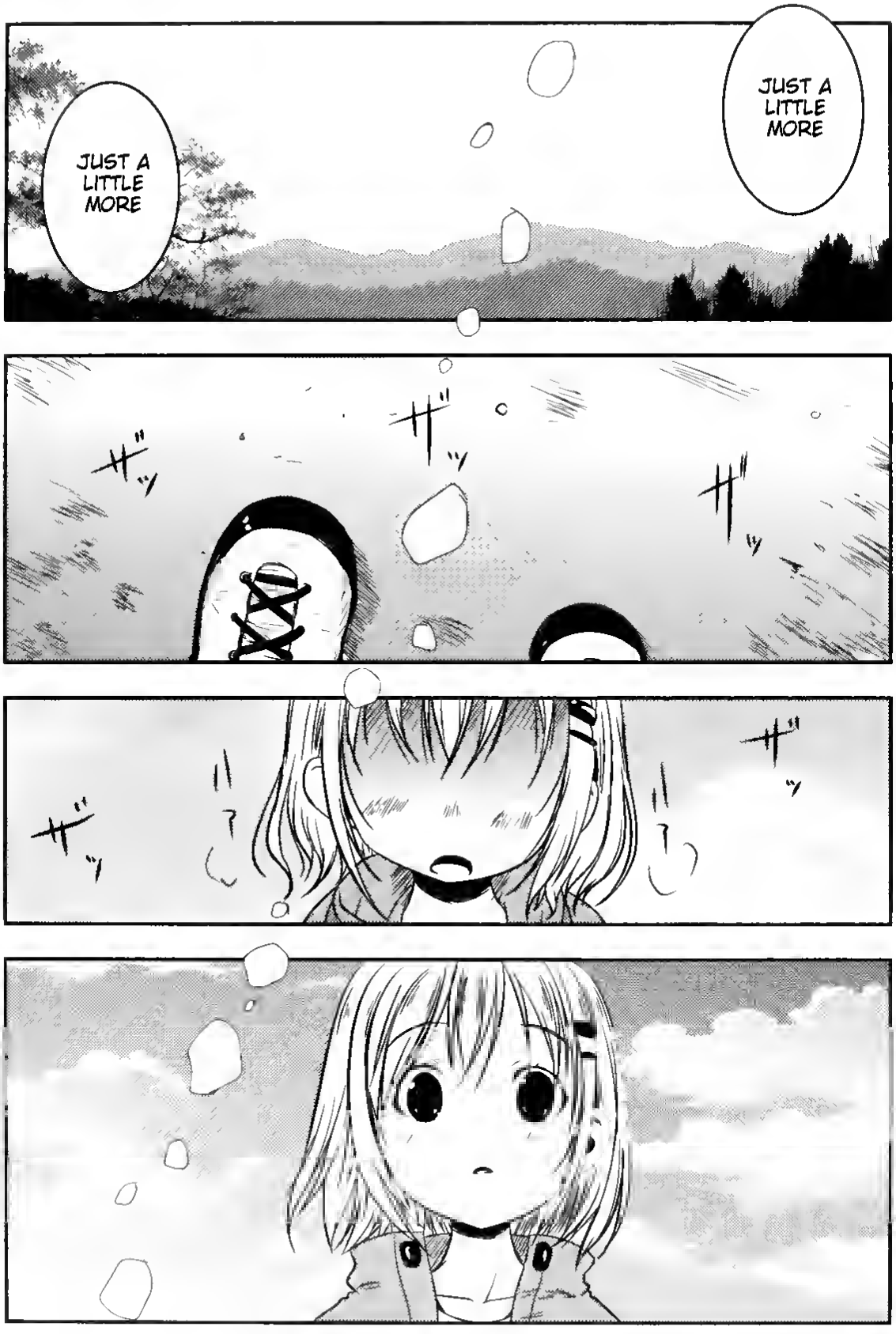
NONE OF THAT
MATTERED
ANYMORE

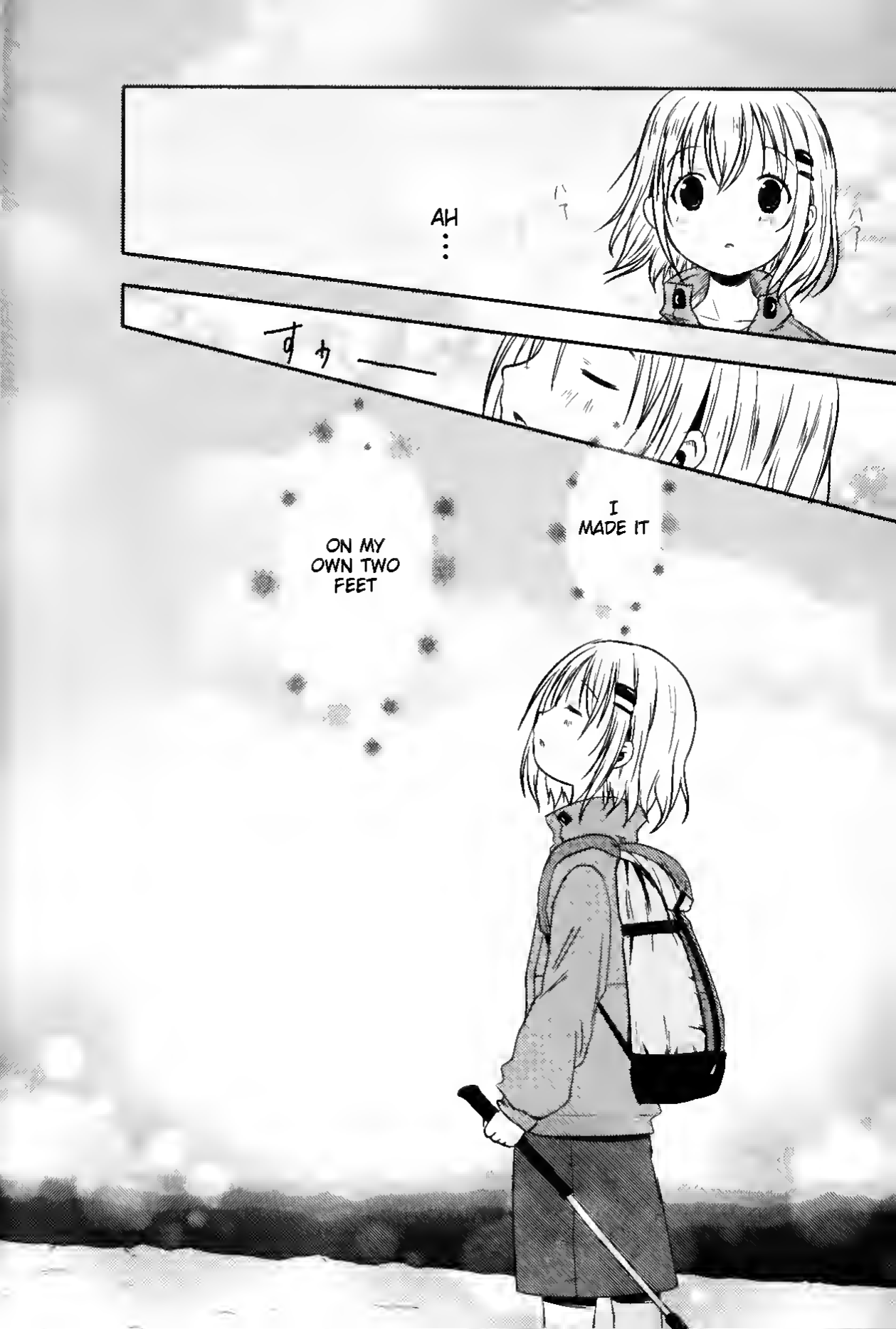


CARRYING HER OWN PACK NOW THAT HER STAMINA IS BACK
OK!
RIGHT! JUST A LITTLE FARTHER TO THE TOP!
!?
THIS IS...
TH-
HUH!?

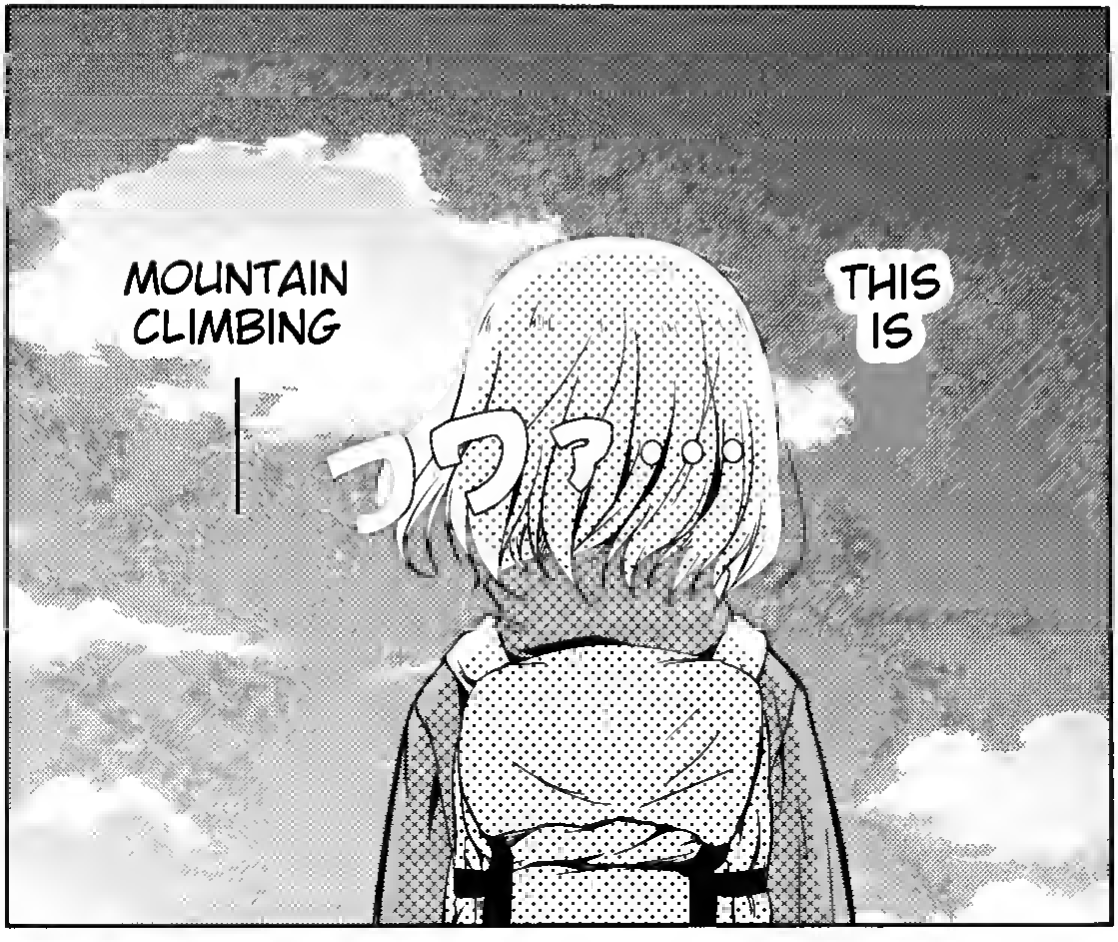
すごい
AN AMAZING CLIFF!
THIS IS BYOUBUIWA, A FAMOUS CLIMBING SPOT!
IS... THAT RIGHT...
THE PEAK IS JUST ABOVE THIS!
AH, IT'S REALLY CLOSE THEN...
IT FEELS LIKE THE SCENERY OPENED UP IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE
LET'S GO!

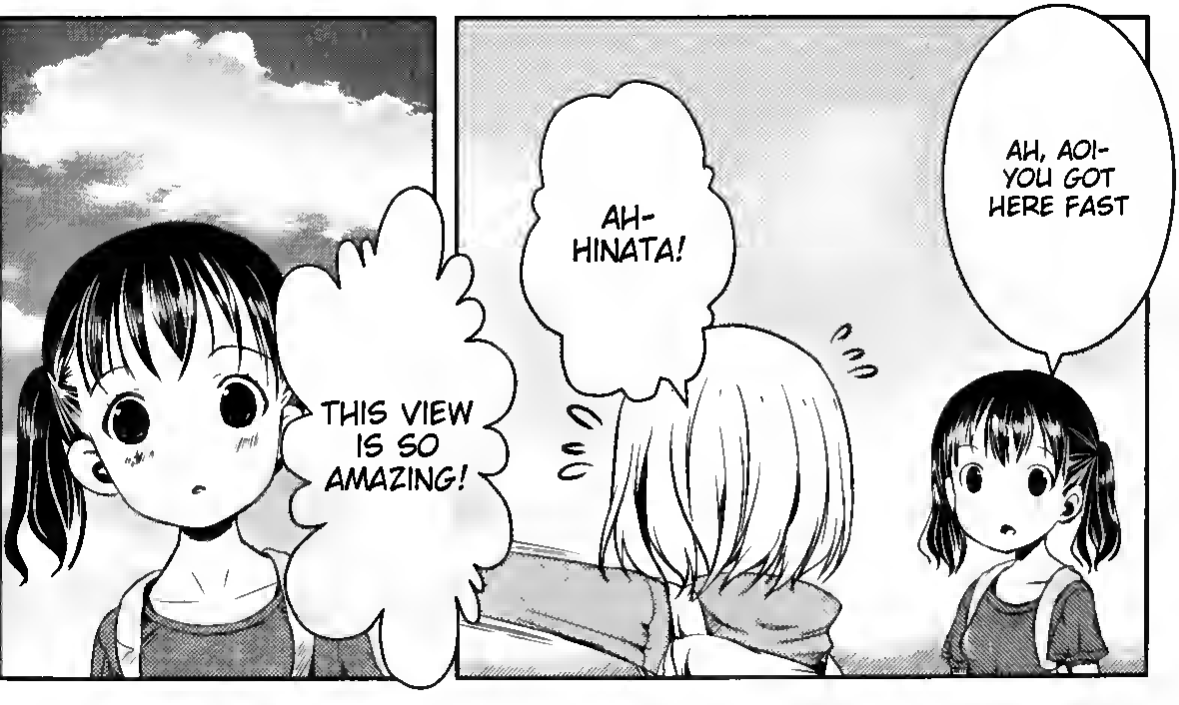

STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
JUST A LITTLE MORE
ONE MORE STEP FORWARD
AND I CAN SEE THE PEAK
JUST A LITTLE MORE!

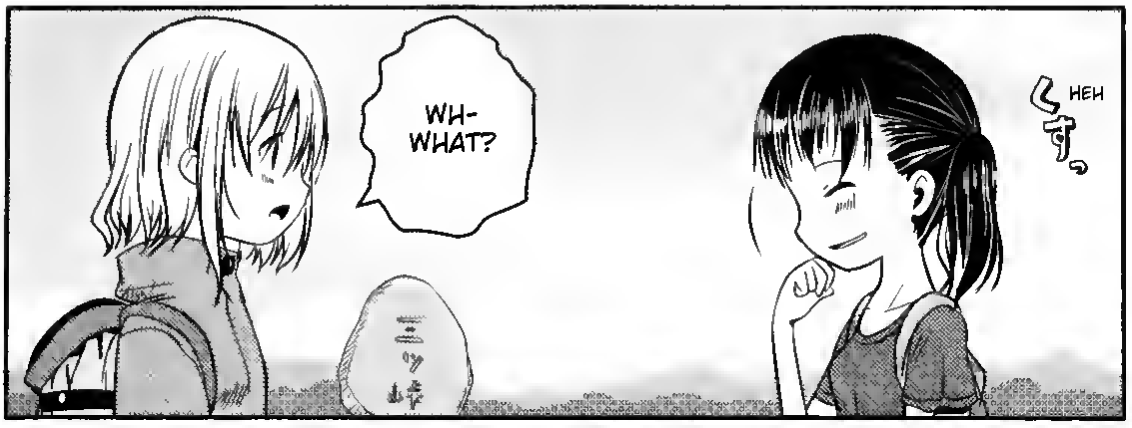

JUST A LITTLE MORE
JUST A LITTLE MORE

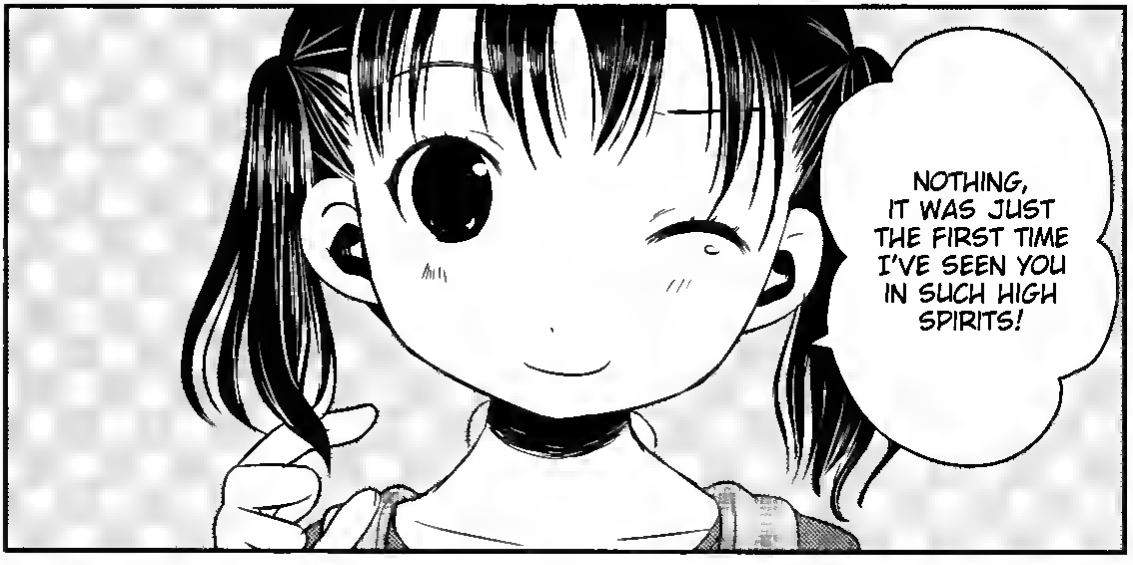

AH
...
I
MADE IT
ON MY
OWN TWO
FEET

AH-
WHAT A SENSE OF FULFILLMENT
WHAT CLEAN, FRESH AIR THIS IS
THIS...
MITSUTOUGEYAMA

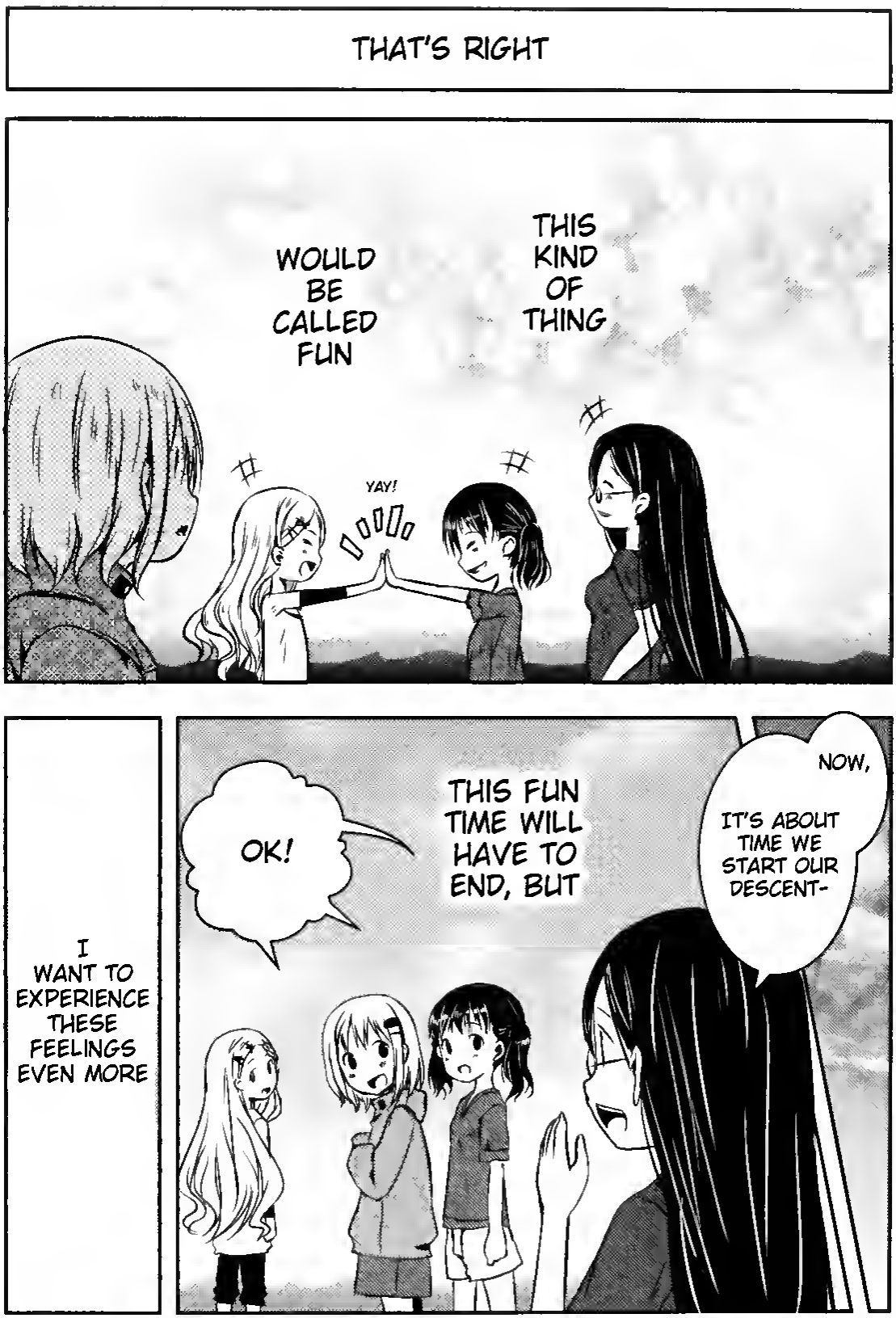

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING
THIS IS
ワクワク…


THIS VIEW IS SO AMAZING!
AH- HINATA!
AH, AOI- YOU GOT HERE FAST


WH-
WHAT?
HEH


NOTHING, IT WAS JUST THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN YOU IN SUCH HIGH SPIRITS!

JUST NOW,
I WAS SMILING?
OH


THAT'S RIGHT
WOULD BE CALLED FUN
THIS KIND OF THING
YAY!
I WANT TO EXPERIENCE THESE FEELINGS EVEN MORE
OK!
THIS FUN TIME WILL HAVE TO END, BUT
NOW, IT'S ABOUT TIME WE START OUR DESCENT-

TREKKING POLES

WHILE MOUNTAIN CLIMBING, YOU'LL FREQUENTLY CATCH SIGHT OF TREKKING POLES. THEY MOSTLY HAVE THE SAME STRUCTURE AS SKI POLES, AND WHEN USED AS A PAIR, HELP YOU MAINTAIN YOUR BALANCE. WHEN IT'S EASIER TO BALANCE, THE STRAIN ON YOUR KNEES IS SOFTENED, WHICH HAS THE EFFECT OF LOWERING HOW FAST YOU BECOME FATIGUED. IT ALSO HAS THE EFFECT OF SHIFTING PROPULSION TO YOUR ARMS SOMEWHAT.

WHILE NOT STRICTLY NECESSARY, YOU WILL OFTEN SEE PEOPLE WITH THEM, AND IN THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBING WORLD THEY ARE A POPULAR ITEM. UNLIKE SKI POLES, THEY CAN BE COLLAPSED WHEN NOT IN USE, MAKING THEM EASIER TO CARRY AROUND.

THOUGH A STANDARD PAIR SHOULD COST NO MORE THAN AROUND 10000 YEN, RECENTLY ITEMS LIKE LIGHTWEIGHT CARBON FIBER POLES (100 GRAMS EACH IS EXTRAORDINARILY LIGHT!) AND POLES WITH SUSPENSION BUILT IN HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR SALE.

WA... WATER....

WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF WATER, IT'S LIKE YOU TURN INTO A ZOMBIE, DRIVEN TO LEECH OFF OF OTHER PEOPLE'S WATER SUPPLY - SO LET'S ALL BRING PLENTY OF WATER!